



National Federation of Federal Employees, IAMAW, AFL-CIO



NFFE-IAM Opposes Bill to Extend Federal Workers' Probationary Periods (H.R. 1470)

Position: **H.R. 1470 would double the probationary period for new federal hires to two years from the current one-year period. This means that new hires would have to endure an additional year of at-will employment after being hired. This bill is supposedly intended to give federal managers more time to identify underperforming federal employees, but there is absolutely no reason to believe that doubling the probationary period is necessary to identify poor performers or will aid federal managers in doing so. This bill is nothing more than another unfair and unfounded attack on federal employees that will further hurt employee morale and dissuade workers from taking positions at federal agencies. NFFE-IAM strongly opposes this legislation.**

Background:

Under current regulations, the first year of service for most federal employees is considered a probationary period. During that year, supervisors evaluate an employee's performance and conduct on the job and may remove the employee if necessary. Employees dismissed during this probationary period generally have no right of appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board. H.R. 1470 would extend the current probationary period to two years.

This bill is supposedly intended to give federal managers more time to identify underperforming federal employees, but there is absolutely no reason to believe that doubling the probationary period is necessary to identify poor performers. It is generally regarded in federal agencies that one year – the current probationary period – is ample time to identify a poor performer. There has been no case built for extending the probationary period of newly hired federal employees. This bill is a solution looking for a problem.

If passed, this bill could do more harm than good with respect to the efficient functioning of federal agencies. With pay and benefits already lagging considerably behind private sector compensation for tens of thousands of hard-to-fill positions in the federal government, potential hires will be less inclined than ever to accept a position with federal agencies knowing they could be fired with no recourse for two full years. To compensate for this added risk of federal employment, agencies will be forced to incur added recruitment costs or be faced with a greater inability to fill critical vacancies. This will result in lower quality employees at federal agencies and a bigger recruitment tab for American taxpayers.

This bill ignores the real problem agencies experience in efficiently filling personnel needs, which is insufficient training for managers.

This bill is nothing more than another unfair and unfounded attack on federal employees that will further hurt employee morale and dissuade workers from taking positions at federal agencies. NFFE-IAM strongly opposes this legislation.